IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1.-20. (Canceled)

21. (Currently Amended) A ceramic siding board for clapboard boarding, said siding board comprising:

an upper side portion extending uniformly in a widthwise direction of said siding board;

a front surface having vertical joint grooves extending in a heightwise direction of said siding board and partially extending within said siding board in a depthwise direction thereof, said front surface is divided into plural areas by said vertical joint grooves such that said plural areas have different widths and heights;

a rear surface opposite to said ~~first~~ front surface;

a lower side portion formed at different heights with boundaries of said vertical joint grooves, said lower side portion having a rear surface stepped portion formed by notching said rear surface, said rear surface stepped portion extending uniformly in the widthwise direction, said rear surface step portion having an upper end surface and an engaging groove formed by notching said upper end surface;

a first lateral side having a lateral overlying tongue portion, said lateral overlying tongue portion being configured to form a shiplap joint by overlying a tongue portion of an adjacent siding board; and

a second lateral side having a lateral underlying tongue portion, said lateral underlying tongue portion being configured to form a shiplap joint by lying under a tongue

portion of another adjacent siding board,

wherein said upper side portion has an engaging notch formed by notching said front surface, ~~; and~~

wherein said engaging groove is configured to engage with an upper-board engaging portion of a fastening member for fastening said siding board to a framework, and said engaging notch is configured to engage with a lower-board engaging portion of the fastening member, and

wherein said vertical joint grooves extend within said siding board in the depthwise direction to said rear surface stepped portion to provide a gap between different height portions of said lower side portion.

22. (Previously Presented) The ceramic siding board according to Claim 21, wherein said upper end surface extends uniformly in the widthwise direction, and wherein said engaging groove extends uniformly in the widthwise direction.

23. (Previously Presented) The ceramic siding board according to Claim 22, wherein said engaging notch is an angled surface extending from said upper side portion to said front surface, and wherein said engaging groove is an angled surface.

24. (Previously Presented) The ceramic siding board according to Claim 22, wherein said engaging notch is a stepped notch, and wherein said engaging groove is a rectangular groove.

25. (Currently Amended) A clapboard boarding structure comprising:

a plurality of ceramic siding boards installed to a framework of a building such that lower side portions of upper siding boards are overlapped frontward of upper side portions of

lower siding boards, wherein said siding boards comprise:

an upper side portion extending uniformly in a widthwise direction of said siding board;

a front surface having vertical joint grooves extending in a heightwise direction of said siding board and partially extending within said siding board in a depthwise direction thereof, said front surface is divided into plural areas by said vertical joint grooves such that said plural areas have different widths and heights;

a rear surface opposite to said ~~first~~ front surface;

a lower side portion formed at different heights with boundaries of said vertical joint grooves, said lower side portion having a rear surface stepped portion formed by notching said rear surface, said rear surface stepped portion extending uniformly in the widthwise direction, said rear surface step portion having an upper end surface and an engaging groove formed by notching said upper end surface;

a first lateral side having a lateral overlying tongue portion, said lateral overlying tongue portion being configured to form a shiplap joint by overlying a tongue portion of a side adjacent siding board; and

a second lateral side having a lateral underlying tongue portion, said lateral underlying tongue portion being configured to form a shiplap joint by lying under a tongue portion of another side adjacent siding board,

wherein said upper side portion has an engaging notch formed by notching said front surface, and

wherein said vertical joint grooves extend within said siding board in the

depthwise direction to said rear surface stepped portion to provide a gap between different height portions of said lower side portion; and

a plurality of fastening members fastening said siding boards to a framework, said fastening members having upper-board engaging portions and lower-board engaging portions,

wherein said engaging grooves engage with said upper-board engaging portions of at least one fastening member, and said engaging notches engage with said lower-board engaging portions of at least another fastening member.

26. (Previously Presented) The clapboard boarding structure according to Claim 25, wherein each of said upper side portions of lower siding boards is disposed at said rear surface stepped portion formed on each of said lower side portions of upper siding boards.

27. (Previously Presented) The clapboard boarding structure according to Claim 25, wherein each of said fastening members comprises a base plate portion that is configured to be fixed to the framework, a supporting portion rising frontward from said base plate portion, said upper-board engaging portion upwardly bent from a front end of said supporting portion, and said lower-board engaging portion downwardly bent from said front end of said supporting portion, each of said fastening members includes at least one oblique angle among said base plate, said supporting portion, said upper-board engaging portion, and said lower-board engaging portion.

28. (Previously Presented) The clapboard boarding structure according to Claim 25, wherein said siding boards are installed in an inclined state configured to have a specific angle to a front surface of the framework, and wherein said vertical joint grooves of one of

said upper siding boards is laterally shifted relative to vertical joint grooves of one of said lower siding boards directly beneath said one of said upper siding boards.

29. (Previously Presented) The clapboard boarding structure according to Claim 25, wherein said upper end surface extends uniformly in the widthwise direction, and wherein said engaging groove extends uniformly in the widthwise direction.

30. (Previously Presented) The clapboard boarding structure according to Claim 25, wherein said engaging notch is an angled surface extending from said upper side portion to said front surface, and wherein said engaging groove is an angled surface.

31. (Previously Presented) The clapboard boarding structure according to Claim 25, wherein said engaging notch is a stepped notch, and wherein said engaging groove is a rectangular groove.

32. (Currently Amended) A ceramic siding board for a clapboard boarding structure, said siding board comprising:

a rear face configured to be disposed adjacent a building;

a front face disposed opposite said rear face, said front face having vertical joint grooves extending in a heightwise direction of said siding board and partially extending within said siding board in a depthwise direction thereof, said front face is divided into plural areas by said vertical joint grooves such that said plural areas have different widths and heights;

an upper face disposed between the front and rear faces and configured to be disposed adjacent a lower face of a first adjacent siding board, said upper face comprising a plurality of notched ~~portion~~ portions configured to be overlapped by the lower face of the first adjacent

siding board, said upper face extending uniformly in a widthwise direction of said siding board, wherein said plurality of notched portions are provided with boundaries of said vertical joint grooves;

a lower face disposed opposite said upper face and configured to be disposed adjacent an upper face of a second adjacent siding board, said lower face comprising a stepped portion configured to overlap a notched portion of the upper face of the second adjacent siding board, the stepped portion extending uniformly in ~~thee~~ the widthwise direction;

a left face configured to be disposed adjacent a right face of a third adjacent siding board, said left face comprising one of a lateral overlying tongue portion configured to form a shiplap joint by overlying a tongue portion on the right face of the third adjacent siding board and a lateral underlying tongue portion configured to form a shiplap joint by lying under the tongue portion on the right face of the third adjacent siding board; and

a right face configured to be disposed adjacent a left face of a fourth adjacent siding board, said right face comprising one of a laterally overlying tongue portion configured to form a shiplap join by overlying a tongue portion on the left face of the fourth adjacent siding board and a laterally underlying tongue portion configured to form a shiplap joint by lying under the tongue portion on the left face of the fourth adjacent siding board.

33. (Previously Presented) The ceramic siding board according to Claim 32, wherein said notched portion of said upper face of said siding board is configured to contact a first fastener to fasten said siding board to the building, and said stepped portion of said lower face of said siding board is configured to contact a second fastener to fasten said siding board to the building.

34. (Previously Presented) The ceramic siding board according to Claim 32, wherein said stepped portion has an upper end surface and an engaging groove formed by notching said upper end surface.

35. (Previously Presented) The ceramic siding board according to Claim 34, wherein said notched portion is an angled surface extending from said upper face to said front face, and wherein said engaging groove is an angled surface.

36. (Previously Presented) The ceramic siding board according to Claim 34, wherein said notched portion is a stepped notch, and wherein said engaging groove is a rectangular groove.

37. (New) The ceramic siding board according to Claim 21, wherein said upper side portion has a plurality of engaging notches formed by notching said front surface, each of said plural areas of said front surface having an engaging notch of said plurality of engaging notches with boundaries of said vertical joint grooves.

38. (New) The clapboard boarding structure according to Claim 25, wherein said upper side portion has a plurality of engaging notches formed by notching said front surface, each of said plural areas of said front surface having an engaging notch of said plurality of engaging notches with boundaries of said vertical joint grooves.

39. (New) A ceramic siding board for clapboard boarding, said siding board comprising:

an upper side portion extending uniformly in a widthwise direction of said siding board;

a front surface having vertical joint grooves extending in a heightwise direction of

said siding board and partially extending within said siding board in a depthwise direction thereof, said front surface is divided into plural areas by said vertical joint grooves such that said plural areas have different widths and heights;

a rear surface opposite to said front surface;

a lower side portion formed at different heights with boundaries of said vertical joint grooves, said lower side portion having a rear surface stepped portion formed by notching said rear surface, said rear surface stepped portion extending uniformly in the widthwise direction, said rear surface step portion having an upper end surface and an engaging groove formed by notching said upper end surface;

a first lateral side having a lateral overlying tongue portion, said lateral overlying tongue portion being configured to form a shiplap joint by overlying a tongue portion of an adjacent siding board; and

a second lateral side having a lateral underlying tongue portion, said lateral underlying tongue portion being configured to form a shiplap joint by lying under a tongue portion of another adjacent siding board,

wherein said upper side portion has a plurality of engaging notches formed by notching said front surface, each of said plural areas of said front surface having an engaging notch of said plurality of engaging notches with boundaries of said vertical joint grooves; and

wherein said engaging groove is configured to engage with an upper-board engaging portion of a fastening member for fastening said siding board to a framework, and said engaging notch is configured to engage with a lower-board engaging portion of the fastening member.